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SUBJECT: EASTERN DRC NOTES - MAY 6

¶1. (U) The items contained in this report consist principally of spot information from various sources. This report is not exhaustive, nor can all the information contained therein be confirmed at this time.

GDRC-CNDP Negotiations

¶2. (U) Local media in Kinshasa reported the May 5 opening meeting of the National Monitoring Commission for the March 2009 GDRC-CNDP Peace Agreement. GDRC International and Regional Cooperation Minister and commission chair Raymond Tshibanda said the meeting will "create the conditions for peace in the eastern DRC." The CNDP delegation is led by Dr. Desire Kamanzi who reiterated earlier promises that the CNDP is prepared to fight alongside the FARDC against the FDLR and other negative forces in the region. The CNDP representation also underlined that the immediate issues before the commission include the modalities of the transformation of the CNDP from an armed group into a political party, the liberation of CNDP prisoners and care of CNDP wounded, and the return of refugees and IDPs.

Security Situation in Orientale and the Kivus

¶3. (SBU) The FARDC reportedly clashed with a local militia in Banyadi, a small village south of Bitima in Haut Uele. Two FARDC soldiers were killed. Further east near Faradje, a FARDC skirmish with the LRA left four LRA fighters dead and two captured.

¶4. (SBU) In Ituri, the FARDC continues to put pressure on armed groups near Poto Poto. Five FARDC soldiers died on April 27 at the hands of the FRPI. There was no confirmation of FRPI casualties. In South Kivu, MONUC has identified four FDLR brigade headquarters and 13-14 battalions.

¶5. (SBU) A contact with good sources in the FARDC claims that Bosco Ntaganda got "spooked" by BBC reports that he was collaborating with MONUC. Fearing imminent arrest, Bosco allegedly fled to familiar CNDP territory near Masisi and rallied a reported 700-1000 loyalists to his side. He also allegedly reclaimed some of the CNDP's heavy weapons which had been turned over to integrated brigades and threw up roadblocks around his new base at Kirolirwe. North Kivu Governor Paluku reportedly went to the area to reassure Bosco personally that he should not fear arrest (Comment: MONUC is not familiar with these alleged events and doubts they actually took place. We will attempt to gain further verification, but we believe this does represent a conceivable course of action for Bosco if he were to feel cornered. End comment).

Integration

¶6. (SBU) Integration continues in some parts of North Kivu, despite GDRC assurances that the FARDC would no longer accept new troops.

Integration in South Kivu has picked up somewhat; 55 members of Kirikicho Mai Mai were expected to enter the regroupment center at Kalehe on May 5. Of approximately 100 child soldiers that MONUC had previously identified in the FARDC ranks, only 14 have been taken out. FARDC Colonel Delphin issued a strong message to his commanders to release all child soldiers, but many are still dispersed throughout the Kivus.

GARVELINK